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SIPDIS

DEPT PASS USAID TO LAC/RSD, LAC/SAM, G/ENV, PPC/ENV
TREASURY FOR USED IBRD AND IDB AND INTL/MDB
USDA FOR FOREST SERVICE: LIZ MAHEW
INTERIOR FOR DIR INT AFFAIRS: K WASHBURN
INTERIOR FOR FWS: TOM RILEY
INTERIOR FOR NPS: JONATHAN PUTNAM
INTERIOR PASS USGS FOR INTERNATIONAL: J WEAVER
JUSTICE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES: JWEBB
EPA FOR INTERNATIONAL: CAM HILL-MACON
USDA FOR ARS/INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH: G FLANLEY
NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL: HAROLD STOLBERG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [XR](#) [BR](#)
SUBJECT: SOUTH AMERICA ESTH NEWS, NUMBER 117

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¶1. The following is part of a series of newsletters, published by the Brasilia Regional Environmental Hub, covering environment, science and technology, and health news in South America. The information below was gathered from news sources from across the region, and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Hub office or our constituent posts. Addressees who would like to receive a user-friendly email version of this newsletter should contact Larissa Stoner at stonerla@state.gov. The e-mail version also contains a calendar of upcoming ESTH events in the region. NOTE: THE NEWSLETTER IS NOW ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE BRASILIA INTRANET PAGE, BY CLICKING ON THE 'HUB' LINK.

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Agriculture

13. Peru Divided Over Benefits, Risks of GMOs

JAN. 2009 - The prospect of genetically modified crops spreading through Peru's coastal desert, Andean highlands and tropical lowlands has split government agencies. Agricultural officials argue biotechnology offers hope to poor farmers, while environmental officials assert it could jeopardize the country's rich biological diversity. Even those in the center disagree on where and how to draw the line, a state of affairs that is very much on display as officials seek public comment for draft rules governing implementation of Peru's 1999 biosafety law. Such debate intensified last July, when a separate measure associated with the biosafety law—a decree promoting biotechnology and empowering the National Institute for Agricultural Innovation (Inia) to conduct biotech oversight and research—was implemented, sparking an outcry from environmentalists. Environment Minister Antonio Brack Egg, a strong supporter of conservation and sustainable use of Peru's genetic resources, called for a public comment period on measures needed to implement both the 1999 biosafety law and the July decree. The Agriculture Ministry posted the regulations on its Web site, but in December 2008 Inia chief Juan Risi Carbone said no comments had been received. Activists, however, note the ministry had not indicated how, when or to whom comments were to be submitted.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

14. Brazil Soy Industry Spots More Amazon Clearing

JAN. 20, 2009 - Brazil's grain crushing industry that vowed to stop buying soybeans farmed on freshly cleared Amazon biome said that it has identified 365 newly deforested areas since its first survey, in

July 2007. The industry is now investigating if soybeans have been planted in the areas, from which it will refuse to purchase grains, the Brazilian Vegetable Oils Industry Association (Abiove) said. The recently discovered areas add to 263 others which were deforested during the year finished in July 2007. At that time, none of them had been used for soy planting. A report with detailed information and photographs will be made public by March, when soy sales in Brazil tend to peak and companies would still have conditions to impose a ban on soy from specific areas. Abiove contracted Globalsat to inspect the areas by air and ground and prepare the report, based also on satellite information provided by state-run Inpe (National Space Research Institute). All major grain processors with operations in Brazil, such as ADM (ADM.N), Cargill [CARG.UL] and Bunge (BG.N) participate in the Soy Moratorium, along with nongovernmental organizations like Greenpeace and WWF Brazil. The initiative was launched in July 2006 and then renewed in June 2008, when the environment ministry first came on board and began to cooperate.

Source - Reuters

15. ADM to Get Sustainable With Brazilian Soybean Farmers

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JAN. 14, 2009 - Archer Daniels Midland Co. said it has joined with Brazilian nonprofit environmental group Alianca Da Terra to launch a program aimed at encouraging Brazilian soy-bean farmers to adopt sustainable practices. The program, Produzindo Certo, or "doing it right," seeks to help farmers maximize the yield potential of their farmland to minimize the environmentally damaging conversion of Brazilian wildland to farm acreage, the U.S. grain-processing and ethanol producer said. As the world's appetite for protein and grains expands, Brazilian growers have aggressively expanded production by stripping the nation's forests and savannas and turning them into farmland. The situation is an ecological disaster in the making, many critics say, complicated by the fact that high demand means the typically low-income owners of the Brazilian frontier land can sell stripped acreage for five or six times the price of undeveloped land. The issue is a sensitive one for U.S. companies that buy or process grain grown on such lands, and at ADM's November shareholder meeting, representatives of a group known as the Rainforest Action Network called on ADM to help fight destruction of the rainforest.

Source - Chicago Tribune

16. Paraguay's Soy Producers Stage 'Tractorazo'

JAN. 2009 - With peasant farmers threatening land invasions to demand land reform and end perceived environmental abuses, Paraguay's soybean producers last month staged a two-day demonstration intended to call the government's attention to rural turmoil. Hundreds of medium- and large-scale soy producers parked their tractors on Dec. 15 and 16 along the sides of the roads in 13 departments, creating a so-called "tractorazo", underscoring the importance of peasant labor to agricultural production. The protest by soy producers comes after months of marches on Asuncion and threats of land invasion by thousands of small and landless peasants, or campesinos, demanding agrarian reform and an end to the spraying of toxic agro-chemicals. Handling the tensions that fueled it marks a key test for President Fernando Lugo, a former Roman Catholic bishop who took office Aug.15.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

Water Issues

17. Study Confirms Chile Glaciers Receding Quickly

JAN. 22, 2009 - Chilean environmental authorities are beginning to worry more about fresh water resources after a government study determined that 92 percent of the country's glaciers - Chile's

principal fresh water suppliers - are receding. The study, performed by Chile's National Water Directorate (DGA), looked at 100 of the nation's 1,720 registered glaciers spanning from northern Region III to Puerto Williams at the far southern tip of the country. Researchers found that only seven of the studied glaciers remain in stable condition, and only one glacier is actually growing. DGA Director Rodrigo Weisner said the results are not surprising. Glacial melting is a common phenomenon brought on by global climate change, and Weisner believes that it is practically inevitable in light of climate change. "But we can still take measures to understand its rhythm, study its behavior, and prevent

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harmful effects," he said. The most important problem associated with receding glaciers is the nation's loss of its most important source of fresh water. Glaciers, compressed masses of ice that slowly carve through landscapes, provide nearly 75 percent of the world's fresh water, according to the University of Colorado's National Snow and Ice Data Center.

Source - Santiago Times

Forests

18. Brazil Reduces Environmental Restrictions on Agriculture in the Amazon

FEB. 06, 2009 - The Government of Brazil approved the expansion of legal farming areas in the Amazon region. A committee with representatives from 13 ministries changed the rules concerning reforestation around two main roads cutting through the northern region of Brazil, including the "Transamazonian" highway, ultimately reducing the area environmentally protected. The measure now requires those who deforest for farming to reforest only 50% of the land rather than 80%. The measure will go to the National Environmental Council for approval before being finally presented to President Lula. Greenpeace has condemned the proposal, stating that "it legitimizes environmental crime." In related news, Brazilian Minister for Strategic Planning, Mangabeira Unger, advocated that environmental licenses for PAC-sponsored construction sites be expedited in the Amazon region. Environmental Minister Carlos Minc critiqued the proposed measure saying that there can be no "special regime" for GOB-sponsored initiatives.

Source - Public Affairs US Embassy Brasilia

19. Internal Brazil Fight May Hamper Amazon Protection

JAN. 31, 2009 - Last week's World Social Forum, a global counterculture gathering dedicated partly to preserving the world's rain forests, became a bureaucratic battleground for two Brazilian officials squabbling over what to do with the vast Amazon region. Environment Minister Carlos Minc used the World Social Forum to take shots at Agriculture Minister Reinhold Stephanes, who is accused by environmentalists of encouraging soy and sugar cane plantations that are blamed for much deforestation. "Our problem is not with agriculture, it is with Minister Stephanes," Environment Minister Carlos Minc told reporters at the social forum. Stephanes countered by saying that "either he (Minc) understands nothing, or he isn't behaving correctly with me." The feud forced President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to order the ministers to stop talking about one another in public, according to accounts in Brazil's leading newspapers, citing anonymous aides close to Silva. Greenpeace campaigner Andre Muggiati said a bigger issue is the fight for cash. "The environment ministry is a weak ministry," he said, noting that the agriculture ministry budget is around \$22 billion a year while that of the environment ministry is some \$174 million. "How can the ministry of environment build strong measures for protection when the agriculture ministry right across the street is spending billions in an activity that has a strong impact on the environment?" Muggiati said.

Source - Associated Press

110. Amazon Rainforest Halfway To Tipping Point, Study Says

JAN. 2009 - The results of a four-year research study on the impact of progressive Amazon deforestation show that a threshold exists at which abrupt changes in climate caused by land-clearing occur, harming the biome's vegetation. The study also suggests that a "tipping point" exists at which some rainforest regions lose their capacity to regenerate. The study, done by researchers at Brazil's state-run National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and presented at an Amazon conference in the western city of Manaus in November, used models to project future changes in climate and vegetation in the Amazon. Underlying the forecasts were data gathered since the early 1990s on Amazon-region deforestation rates and road construction, which has been a key precursor to land clearing. An estimated 20% of the Brazilian Amazon has been deforested since European settlement of the region. The study says that once 40% of the Amazon has been cut-a point that will be reached in 2050 if average deforestation rates since the early 1990s continue-rainfall levels will plummet by 18% to 20%, temperatures will increase by 1.70 Centigrade and the evaporation rate will drop by 11%. The study forecasts that these climate effects would turn the eastern Amazon, where deforestation is heaviest, into a savannah, but not cause similar changes in the western part of the Amazon. They also would decrease rainfall and accelerate desertification in northeastern Brazil, and reduce rainfall in northern Argentina and Paraguay, the study says.

Source - EcoAmericas (contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

111. Brazil: Court Preparing Key Amazon Land-Rights Decision

JAN. 2009 - Brazil's Supreme Court is expected to order in February the removal of white settlers from one of the biggest indigenous reserves in the Amazon, a vast swath of rainforest larger than the U.S. state of Connecticut. The decision, addressing a long-standing dispute over land rights in the 4.2-million-acre (1.7-million-ha) Raposa Serra do Sol indigenous reserve in the northern state of Roraima, would likely set precedent for the handling of other such conflicts in the Brazilian Amazon. Indians inhabiting the reserve have clashed violently with settlers in the past, and have vowed to expel them if the high court doesn't. Meanwhile, the settlers have said they would not leave voluntarily. When police attempted to evict them last April, they blockaded roads and destroyed bridges. At issue is the refusal of some 400 settlers-six large rice-farm operators and 10 big cattle ranchers and their employees-to leave Raposa Serra do Sol despite government offers to indemnify them for their investments and resettle them just south of the reserve. But a Supreme Court vote last month made their removal all but a foregone conclusion. In a decision that has yet to be finalized, eight of the court's 11 justices, a clear majority, favored expulsion of the settlers.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

112. For Peruvians, Baskets for the U.S. Market Bring a New Way of Life

JAN. 19, 2009 - Women in a remote Amazon village can weave fibers from the branch of the chambira palm tree into practically anything they need - fishing nets, hammocks, purses, skirts and dental floss. However, for the last year they have put their hopes in baskets, weaving hundreds to build inventory for export to the United States.

Their first international buyers are the San Diego Natural History Museum and San Diego Zoo, and they plan to sell to other museums and home decor purveyors like the Field Museum in Chicago and eventually Cost Plus. The circuitous route these baskets have taken from the jungle to American store shelves started with a bird watcher's passion for natural habitats, passed through a regional government whose policies have become increasingly more conservationist, and,

supporters say, should end with better lives for the weavers and their communities. The enterprise is one of many ventures here in the Amazon aimed at "productive conservation," which advocates say will save the rain forest by transforming it into a renewable economic resource for local people.

Source - The New York Times

Wildlife

[13. Peruvian Region Outlaws Biopiracy](#)

JAN. 21, 2009 - A municipality of Peru is claiming to be the first in the world to enact a law outlawing biopiracy and protecting indigenous knowledge at a regional level. Cusco - in the Peruvian Andes, once the capital of the Inca Empire - has outlawed the plundering of native species for commercial gain, including patenting resources or the genes they contain. Corporations or scientists must now seek permission from, and potentially share benefits with, the local people whose traditions have protected the species for centuries. Indigenous communities can now implement ways to protect local resources, including creating registers of biodiversity and protocols for granting access to it. Local scientists and activists believe the law's value lies in the fact that for the first time a regional government will be empowered to challenge its national government on biopiracy. But while the law is an important precedent, it could come into conflict with national laws regarding the recording of indigenous knowledge, said Maria Scurrah, a Peruvian scientist specializing in farmer's rights.

Source - SciDev

[14. Ten New Amphibian Species Discovered In Colombia](#)

FEB. 02, 2009 - Scientists announced the discovery of 10 amphibian species in Colombia potentially new to science, including an orange-legged rain frog, three poison frogs and three transparent "glass" frogs. During a three-week expedition in Colombia's northwestern Tacarcuna hills in the Darien Gap bordering Panama, scientists identified about 60 species of amphibians, 20 reptiles and almost 120 species of birds, many of them apparently unique to the area. The expedition, led by Conservation International herpetologists and ornithologists from Colombia's Ecotropico Foundation, identified potentially new species of amphibians, including three glass frogs, whose transparent skin can reveal internal organs, a harlequin frog, two rain frogs and one salamander. The group said Colombia has one of the most diverse amphibian communities in the world, with 754 species currently recorded.

Source - AFP (no link)

Fishing & Marine Conservation

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[15. Antarctic: Ocean Fertilization Experiment Suspended, Reactivated](#)

JAN. 20, 2009 - An Indo-German iron fertilization experiment (LOHAFEX) planned for a deep-ocean area near Antarctica has been suspended, pending an independent assessment of its environmental impact. The suspension follows intervention by the German Ministry for Education and Research following pressure from environmental groups. The Montreal-based ETC Group, the Indian Biodiversity Forum, German researchers and others had protested against the experiment on the ground that it was fraught with potentially severe ecological consequences and violated the moratorium on ocean fertilization decided upon by the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The experiment envisaged dumping of about 20 tons of iron sulfate in the Scotia Sea near Antarctica to induce an algal bloom.

Source - IISD

¶16. UPDATE: The German Science Ministry announced on January 26 that it will allow the controversial "LOHAFEX" experiment to proceed in the Southern Ocean. Following an NGO publicity campaign that claimed LOHAFEX violated the Convention on

¶17. Panama Accused of Undermining Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Preserve

JAN. 2009 - Four years after banning commercial fishing in species-rich Coiba National Park, Panama's National Assembly revoked a critical article of the law prohibiting the use of purse-seine nets for tuna fishing in the 1,040-square-mile (2,700-sq-km) marine preserve. Environmentalists say the June 30 repeal of the ban on purse-seine tuna fishing in Coiba, reportedly influenced by Spanish tuna companies, could pose serious risks to endangered marine turtles and dozens of species of sharks, whales and dolphins, which can become trapped in the purse seines as bycatch. They also say it undermines Panama's ocean conservation commitments under a 2004 treaty signed with Colombia, Costa Rica and Ecuador to protect migratory marine species in a vast swath of ocean named the Marine Conservation Corridor of the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

Science & Technology

¶18. Brazil and China to Partner on New Technologies

JAN. 22, 2009 - Brazil and China have agreed to collaborate on developing technologies to tackle energy problems and climate change. The Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (UFRJ), and the University of Tsinghua, China, have announced the creation of the Brazil-China Center for Innovative Technologies, Climate Change and Energy. The center, to be based at the University of Tsinghua, in Beijing, will receive almost US\$1 million in initial investment from the Brazilian innovation agency, Research and Projects Financing (FINEP). The Brazilian part of the center will be headed by the Graduate Engineering Project Coordination (COPPE) of

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the UFRJ. One of the center's first goals will be to map biofuel sources in Brazil and China, in order to develop common approaches to their exploitation. Another will be to estimate greenhouse gas emissions by both countries and provide their respective governments with technical information to help them develop mitigation policies.

The projects will aim to produce practical results for Brazilian and Chinese industries, and to provide high quality science and technology information for governments.

Source - SciDev

¶19. Argentina: S&T Back on the Development Agenda

DEC. 02, 2008 - After more than 40 years of active persecution followed by years of government indifference, science and technology (S&T) are making a dramatic return to the development agenda in Argentina. Seen as a breeding ground for political dissent, academia was targeted for suppression by the Argentinean military government from the 1960s to the 1980s. The field continued to suffer in the 1990s under President Carlos Menem who was uninterested in research, and through a financial crisis. But now, President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner has said she sees science as a "key to the nation's economic future". Following her election in October 2007, Kirchner set up a Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation and hopes to increase the country's investment in S&T from 0.66 per cent in 2007 to one per cent in ¶2010. To retain scientists and lure them back from overseas the government plans to increase their monthly salaries by 30 per cent to about US\$1,000 a month; increase the 2009 government budget for

competitive research grants by 40 per cent; and build a US\$50 million science complex in Buenos Aires.

Source - SciDev

Extractive Industries

120. Correa Ally Explains Break with President Over Mining

JAN. 2009 - EcoAmericas January edition brings a Q&A with Msnica Chuji Gualinga, an indigenous-rights activist from the Ecuadorian Amazon community of Sarayacu who supported Rafael Correa in his successful 2006 run for president of Ecuador. In 2007, she served as his first communications minister. Now, however, Chuji is one of Correa's fiercest critics on account of a sharp disagreement over mining. Chuji left Correa's cabinet after six months and won election to the Constituent Assembly, which last year rewrote Ecuador's constitution and passed various high-profile measures. One measure she helped broker, largely due to environmental concerns, suspended mining in Ecuador in January 2008. More recently, on Jan. 12, a new mining bill allowing the resumption of open-pit mining practices, was passed by a commission appointed to serve as an interim legislative body pending the election of a new Congress in April of this year. Ms. Chuji, who is not on the commission, argues that if signed by Correa, the legislation will do irreversible environmental harm by allowing large-scale open-pit mining.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete interview)

Energy

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121. Coal and Oil Will Make Magallanes "Chile's Energy Center"

FEB. 03, 2009 - According to Chile's National Energy Commission president Marcelo Tokman, the Magallanes region in the extreme south of Chile is becoming the "energy center of the country" based primarily on the development of coal resources and the exploration for hydrocarbons. "The coal mining project at Isla Riesco in a context of world energy crisis has become strategic, because we need to diversify our energy matrix", said Tokman during a visit to Punta Arenas. The Isla Riesco's four exploitable areas have proven reserves of 200 million tons of coal, so far the largest in Chile. Tokman also emphasized the significance of the hydrocarbons exploration drive in Magallanes and Tierra del Fuego which has attracted "important oil companies and millions of US dollars in investments". Chile dependence on foreign coal supplies for its coal-based electricity generation is 93%, but with the development of the Isla Riesco resources, "we will ensure stability to our coal-based electricity generating plants".

Source - MercoPress

122. Biofuels Head to Chile's Forests

FEB. 02, 2009 - Chile has set its sights on producing second-generation plant-based fuels from forest biomass within the next five years. However, Chile's environmental and social activities warn that the country must also consider the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of such an endeavor. Chile's heavy energy dependence on fossil fuels and its continued increase in emissions of climate-changing gases have led this South American country to pursue renewable energy options like solar, wind, geothermal and biomass. A law passed in April 2008 requires that as of 2010 at least five percent of Chile's electricity must come from non-conventional renewable sources, including biomass. Beginning in 2015, the proportion must increase 0.5 percent annually until reaching a full 10 percent in 2024. Two consortiums were created in October for research and development of lignocellulosic biofuels, that is, fuels based on woody fibers. The goal is to

"surpass the expansion limits and the grave conflicts that the current crop-based fuels (made from foods like maize or sugarcane) can create," said Guilherme Schuetz, coordinator of the regional biofuels group of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Source - Tierramerica

123. Argentina to Stop Sale of Incandescent Bulbs

JAN. 2009 - Beginning Dec. 31, 2010, the sale of incandescent light bulbs will be illegal in Argentina. The prohibition, proposed last March by Argentine President Cristina Kirchner, cleared its last legislative hurdle when the Senate approved it on Dec. 17 by unanimous vote. The Senate left intact a change that the lower house of Congress, the Chamber of Deputies, made to the proposal last June. While Kirchner's proposal prohibited production of incandescent bulbs in Argentina, the modified version that is now law only bans their importation and sale. This means incandescent bulbs could continue to be manufactured in Argentina as long as they are exported. The new law empowers the government to eliminate import taxes on energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs and on the parts and equipment needed to produce them. It does not address the

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disposal of used fluorescent bulbs, which contain mercury, but an electronic-waste bill now being debated in Congress does provide for the collection of spent fluorescent bulbs. Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua have launched Latin America's most aggressive programs to root out incandescent bulbs, according to the Argentine office of the environmental group Greenpeace.

Source - EcoAmericas

124. Brazilians Betting Obama Will Be Green Enough to Help Brazil

JAN. 22, 2009 - Brazil is hoping that its ethanol industry may gain momentum and space in the United States market during the administration of Barack Obama, who has already shown himself drawn towards environmental causes. Obama's campaign commitments included reducing carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, reducing dependence on foreign oil imports, developing and implementing clean energy technologies and making the United States a leading country in issues pertaining to climate change. The world's leading economy aims to consume 136 billion liters of ethanol in 2022. The current consumption is 30 billion (against 25 billion in Brazil). Andre Nassar, Director General at Icone (Institute of Studies on Trade and International Negotiation), believes that Obama's concern with increasing energy efficiency may also translate into the United States' participation in the post-Kyoto Protocol and in a new clean development mechanism for carbon trade, with the adoption of goals for reducing emission of greenhouse gases. Besides selling more ethanol to the United States, Brazil could attract United States investment in clean energy and also develop partnerships for technology transfer, research and development.

Source - Brazzilmag

125. Brazilian Venture to Make New Variety of Diesel Fuel

JAN. 2009 - Amyris, a California-based biotechnology firm, and Crystalsev, a Brazilian ethanol distributor, recently formed a joint venture to commercially produce a cleaner, renewable form of diesel fuel from sugarcane, the first such venture of its kind anywhere. Sugarcane diesel has substantially the same chemical structure as fossil-fuel diesel, except that the former has one type of hydrocarbon molecule and the latter contains a range of them. The main difference in the two diesels' physical properties is that sugarcane diesel contains no sulfur and when burned emits no nitrogen oxide, making it that much more eco-friendly. And the fuel is not related to biodiesel, which is made by blending vegetable oil and ethanol with standard diesel. The California biotech firm, Amyris, says it has pioneered a way to make cleaner, renewable diesel by genetically modifying a yeast, which is then used to ferment sugarcane juice. This metabolizes the cane juice into a pre-diesel, after which some alcohols and impurities are removed to

yield pure diesel. The joint venture plans in 2010 to begin producing 10 million liters (2.64 million gallons) of sugarcane diesel annually in Brazil. That production will occur at an ethanol refinery owned by Santelisa Vale, Brazil's second largest ethanol producer and the controlling shareholder of Crystalsev.

Source - EcoAmericas (contact L. Stoner for complete article)

Pollution

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¶26. Cleaner Diesel Improves Air Quality in Bogota

FEB. 11, 2009 - Due to tighter Ministry of Environment (MOE) regulations and clean diesel measures taken by state oil company Ecopetrol, Bogota's air quality -- historically among the poorest in Latin America -- is the best that it has been in the last twelve years. Both the MOE and Ecopetrol publicly reiterate that in 2009 they will take further steps to improve air quality, with Ecopetrol planning to invest USD600 million over four years to increase Colombia's capacity to produce clean diesel locally.

Source - BOGOTA 420

Climate Change

¶27. Guyana and Norway Cooperate to Reduce Greenhouse gas Emissions
FEB. 04, 2009 - President of Guyana Bharrat Jagdeo and Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg in Oslo, Norway, agreed to establish a partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Guyana deforestation, with the goal to establish mechanisms on deforestation and forest degradation to be included in a post-2012 climate change agreement. In a joint statement, the two leaders said they have agreed on the need to keep climate change firmly at the top of the international agenda and underlined that it is essential to reach an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen in December. According to Stoltenberg, efforts could include results-based mechanisms, as well as adequate, predictable and sustainable financial compensation - to be ultimately determined through future United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations from developed countries to developing countries for their REDD efforts.

Source - Caribbean Net News

¶28. Chile's CO2 Emissions Expected to Quadruple by 2030

JAN. 12, 2009 - Chile's CO2 emissions are expected to quadruple by 2030, failing change to its national energy policy, the Chilean Minister for Energy, Marcelo Tokman, warned. The estimated increase is largely credited to the sharp rise in planned construction of coal-fired power stations, as predicted in a recently issued report, the New Guidelines for Energy Policy, that was presented to President Bachelet by the Minister for Energy on January 6... The report warns: 'Chile must assume the risk of being subjected to restrictions or costs associated with international measures taken to tackle global warming'.

Source - Carbon Offsets Daily

¶29. Brazil: Flooding Leads to Calls for Preventive Measures

JAN. 09, 2009 - Torrential rains have deluged several Brazilian states since November, causing nearly 200 deaths so far and reinforcing environmentalist campaigns calling for urgent adaptation measures. At least 136 people have been killed by mudslides or flooding in the southern state of Santa Catarina over the past two months. A large number of people are also missing, and there are 300 confirmed cases of leptospirosis, which will add to the likely death toll. The rains flooded, damaged or destroyed the homes of over 1.5 million people in Santa Catarina, one-quarter of the state's

population. The affected regions are in the east of the state, the

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most industrialized and populous part of Santa Catarina, so the economic losses are enormous. In the central state of Minas Gerais, 23 people have died and 60,000 people in 97 towns and cities have had to abandon their homes. Tens of thousands of people's homes were flooded in the Atlantic seaboard states of Rio de Janeiro and Espirito Santo, where there were at least six deaths from leptospirosis, and the death toll is mounting. Environmentalists call for measures to prevent the expansion of cities into risk areas, including educating communities, training civil defense staff, and rehabilitating "structural works" such as slope stabilization and cleaning river beds and banks to ensure unobstructed passage for floodwaters.

Source - IPS News

130. World Bank Urging Region to Keep Up Climate Efforts

JAN. 2009 - A new World Bank report on Latin America and the Caribbean warns that the region must not let the global financial crisis derail its efforts against climate change. Latin America has made significant advances in fighting global warming through the use of new technologies in renewable energy, biofuels and transport, and could lead developing nations in such efforts, the report says. But with climate-related problems such as natural disasters and declining agricultural productivity looming, the report contends, the region must not let economic pressures undermine clean-energy investment. Instead, it says, the region should take advantage of opportunities afforded by the crisis. Massive public investment in clean energy can be a "win-win" policy that also stimulates economic recovery, the World Bank argues. Moreover, the report contends, "countries that switch from a high-carbon to a low-carbon economy during the economic slump can enjoy 'first mover advantages,' that is, a greater competitive ability to promote long-term growth." Entitled "Low Carbon, High Growth: Latin American Responses to Climate Change," the study is part of an annual effort by the World Bank to lay groundwork for inter-governmental debates and options in different areas through so-called flagship reports.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

General

131. UNASUR to Create Infrastructure Council in April

DEC. 31, 2008 - Government representatives from the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) plan to establish an infrastructure council in April 2009, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet told BNAmericas. The council is expected to be created at the next UNASUR meeting, scheduled for April 20 2010, when Bachelet will also leave her post as the organization's pro tempore president. The new infrastructure council will analyze, plan and coordinate infrastructure development among UNASUR members: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela. The objective is to support the development of the South American infrastructure integration initiative IIRSA, which has been subject to delays accentuated by the financial crisis. Among the projects to be analyzed by the council are the TransAndino Central rail tunnel and IIRSA-related highways. The council will also set up amicable frameworks for airport, port, rail, highway and waterway initiatives, among others, as the

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development of such projects is often affected by political interests.

Source - BIC

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